July 24, 2020
Issue #15

**Rita Benn,
Mindfulness Educator
and Researcher**

The Crazy Wisdom Weekly

Published by the *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* during the Pandemic.

The Crazy Wisdom Weekly

A Note From Our Editor

For many of us we see the coming of August as the end of summer and the beginning of a new school year. I am one of those people who look forward to the cooler nights and the regular schedule returning. This year, however, with the graduation of our youngest child from high school, the end of summer feeling has come, but it's not real. There won't be a return to school schedule, no sack lunches to prepare, no nagging about homework. The end of summer this year brings about the end of a life stage for me, and the beginnings of a new one.

This school year is still up in the air for many families though—will the kids go back to the classroom? Will we start and then have to pivot our learning back to a virtual classroom? I'm so glad I don't have to worry about these questions anymore! I really feel empathy for the teachers who are concerned about being in the classroom, and for the parents and children who desperately want a return to education in person. It's not an easy decision.

Perhaps both can be offered if parents and school districts are willing to be flexible. Some teachers could teach in the classroom setting, some could teach in a virtual setting, parents would have the choice about how to educate their children. It would take a lot of working together to accomplish this, but I think it could work! For other ideas and opinions about this coming school year and how you can help your children slide back into it, see Rita Benn's article on page 7.

Enjoy your last few weeks of summer!

Jennifer Carson

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Healing Nectar Arts

Compassionate Self-Care Cards & Posters

Created by: Evelyn Ann Barber, an educator of over 30 years, with a MA in Human Development, Leadership in Education, a BA in Child Development, and is a Certified Child Life Specialist. She is a passionate voice in education and healthcare settings and advocate for the health and wellbeing of children and families. Learn more at healingnectararts.com

Compasstionate Self-Care Cards and Posters are designed to offer a gateway for people to explore and share their experiences and emotions while building connections of trust and safety for healthier life skills, coping skills, and relationships—one person at a time. The cards include positive affirmations and open-ended questions to promote healthy mental and emotional self-care.

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Thank you to our contributors for this issue:

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Rita Benn
Michelle McLemore
Master Zhong Hai
Sarah Nisbett
Lauren Madaras
Carol Karr
Sarah Newland
Jennifer Carson
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Word of the Week:

Widddendream

A state of mental disturbance or confusion.

Because of Covid-19, we didn't publish our usual springtime *Crazy Wisdom Community Community Journal* in mid-April. We will publish our fall issue on schedule. In the meantime, we created a weekly online version—short, and lively, and perhaps a mild distraction for our local and regional readership. We welcome articles, interviews, recipes, wisdom, personal essays, breathing exercises, favorite places for socially distant walks, news of your dogs, whatever. Send your submission to Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

Elena's Italian Garden

By Yvonne Tomei

Elena's Italian Garden isn't your ordinary little backyard garden. The lively garden sits on four acres of land in Woodhaven, MI. They have a plethora of fava bean plants, onions, more cucumbers than they can handle, tomatoes, five different kinds of peppers, eggplants, Brussel sprouts, Borlotto Lingua Di Fuoco (tongue of fire), bush beans, radishes, and olives.

"Watching my garden grow from seeds to these huge plants that are providing food for me and my family is such an amazing experience. You have a connection with your food, you know exactly where it came from, its organic, no pesticides, it's the best of the best!" Elena Ciotti said.

Ciotti's family is from Guardia Piemontese, located in southern Italy in the Provincia Di Cosenza. She is a first-generation Italian born in the USA. Ciotti was taught to garden by her Nonno (Grandpa in Italian), Giuseppe Guglielmetti.

"Ever since I was a child, I loved to be outside and help in the garden. We have a large family and all my memories are of us gathered in the garden and kitchen."

Ciotti spends approximately two hours a day taking care of all of the plants. There are often times where she spends five hours, depending on what needs to be done, and how hot it is outside! I asked the young gardner what her favorite plant was to take care of.

"My favorite plant is a tomato plant. I love all tomatoes, especially home-grown tomatoes. You can really tell the difference between good home grown and store bought. Tomatoes are very versatile, they are delicious with sandwiches, salads, and especially pasta."

Giuseppe, Ciotti 's nonno, immigrated from Italy to Michigan in 1977 after moving from country to country to provide for his family. After her Nono passed away in March of this year, Ciotti decided she was going to take it upon herself to follow in his footsteps and family tradition.

I know you're probably thinking, "Gardening on four acres of land?! How do you water all of that?" When Elena's grandfather built their house, he dug a small trench to collect rainwater. He also installed a sump pump and there's an entire system of hoses underground and around the garden to water everything. All the pump needs is electricity!

I asked Ciotti if she had any advice for first time gardeners or gardeners in general and she said, "Advice I would give to a first-time gardener is do not give up! Sometimes plants die and that is very discouraging, and sometimes they don't fruit, and sometimes they don't come out to be what you expected. It's better to try something and fail than to not try something and wonder if it would've been a success or not. You will always learn from your mistakes."

Along with gardening, Ciotti 's Nonni (grandparents) taught her about food preservation. Gardening and preserving go hand in hand with the Ciotti family. This skill was something vital to them because back in the day, without refrigerators or freezers, families had to grow and preserve everything in order to have food in the winter months. Some methods they used to preserve these vegetables are canning and drying.

"We can a lot of our vegetables but, my favorite are peppers called pepperoncino. We put them in jars with olive oil and the spiciness from the peppers is infused into the olive oil. We basically use this like a condiment—we put it on pasta, sandwiches, anything we want to make spicy. It's so good."

You don't see many 21-year-olds gardening, but this is more than just a hobby to Ciotti—it is a lifestyle. The Italian way of life taught and brought down from generation to generation and Ciotti wishes to continue that with her own family someday.

To get a taste of this lifestyle, Ciotti shares her gardening and lifestyle tips on her Youtube channel, and will be selling produce from her garden at local farmers markets when they open back up.

Find her on Youtube or follow her on Instagram @ elenasitaliangarden.

From Our Blog

Cooking — A Spiritual Practice

By Liza Baker

According to Sophie Egan in her book *Devoured,* March 2015 was a watershed moment in the eating lives of Americans: for the first time since the government began tracking our spending habits around food, we spent more money on food prepared outside the home (restaurants, takeout, etc.) than on groceries that we cooked at home.

In *Cooked*, author/activist Michael Pollan writes that the average American spends 27 minutes making dinner, far less time than it takes to watch an episode of Iron Chef! America has become a nation of people who love to watch cooking as a spectator sport but don't otherwise engage in it regularly.

Cooking from scratch every night of the week can seem overwhelming, even more so if you make a hot breakfast and pack a homemade lunch (or four) every day because let's be honest, we are all living high-octane lives, especially if we are not only busy professionals ourselves but also the parents of over-scheduled kids. Add to that the ideas that each meal should look like something out of a gourmet cooking magazine and be prepared at the speed of light, and well, there's not much incentive to even try.

But try we must if we want to make some changes to our waistlines.

Importantly, cooking from scratch on a regular basis can be what Charles Duhigg, author of *The Power of Habit*, would call "a keystone habit": one that unintentionally causes a cascade of positive outcomes. You may notice that once you make a habit of cooking at home using whole ingredients, your weight drops, your numbers fall in line, you spend more quality time with family at the table enjoying the food you've prepared, you have more energy, you work out more regularly, you sleep better, your stress level drops, and so on.

You can enter this cascade at a different point as well: you work out more regularly, you start eating better to fuel your workouts, you sleep better, your stress level drops, you lose weight, etc. Or you take up meditation, your stress level drops, you lose weight, etc. The point is, one habit fuels other ones, partly for physiological reasons and partly for psychological ones: success in one area of our lives tends to help us feel as though we can take on another problematic area.

For tips on reclaiming your health and your kitchen, read more on our blog!

Yoga Pose of the week

SAMAREKHASAN: Straight Posture

By Master Shong Hai (also known as Winnie)

Through the practice of the posture the vital airs are purified and controlled. Subsequently the gross and subtle senses are slowly withdrawn from their objects. As a result, the mind becomes introvert and does not run after sense-objects.

TECHNIQUE:

1. Stand erect with the heels together at 90 degrees.
2. Inhale slowly while raising the arms high up overhead.
3. Join the palms of the up-stretched arms with the fingertips pointing upward.
4. Adjust the upper arms behind the ears so that the arms remain straight at the elbows
5. Having assumed the position detailed above (while inhaling)
6. While exhaling, bring the hands down to the normal position.
7. Repeat the posture five times.

Therapeutic and Physical Effects:

Increases lung capacity and develops the chest and tones spinal nerves and relieves sciatic pain; gives correct and graceful posture; helps adolescents to increase their height; strengthens shoulders, ankles, and toes.

Learn more about Yoga at Triple Crane Monastery by visiting their website.

5 questions for Rita Benn

As we look forward to the start of a new school year, what challenges are teachers going to face in September that parents can help head off or support through the remainder of the summer?

Teachers will likely face many different challenges this fall. They may be required to adapt to making very sudden changes in scheduling and modes of teaching instruction.
They may be asked to prepare to provide lessons virtually which will require a lot of time to master effectively both from a pedagogical and technology perspective.

Creating sets of lessons that are interesting and creative for students using different modes of instruction and meeting diverse learning abilities will certainly be taxing.
Virtual teaching also limits the kinds of interactions teachers have with their students, and can restrict the relational component that is so critical to motivating student learning.

With the experience of remote home-school learning this past Spring, family changes in routine, a summer of continued social distancing, and media exposure to the abhorrent racial injustices of our society, it is likely that students' anxiety levels are heightened. This anxiety will not necessarily abate come fall and can reverberate in many different ways behaviorally, including affecting student learning. Teachers will be increasingly concerned about how to strike a balance between supporting student mental health and meeting more stringent academic demands. If and when students come back into the classroom, teachers will also have an added classroom management burden—enforcing social distancing and mask wearing guidelines to protect their own and student health.

Teaching, under normal circumstances, is a profession noted to rank the highest in occupational stress. In the fall, with uncertainty around the pandemic and opening of in-person classes, it is reasonable to expect that teachers will be even more stressed.

What can parents do to help teachers with these challenges?

It would be wonderful for parents to show appreciation to their student's teacher for the job they are doing and respond to teacher requests. Most parents got a chance to experience a bit of what it is like to be in the driving seat of the teacher for a few months this past Spring.

For the rest of the summer, parents can model appropriate social distancing and masking in indoor and outside spaces, emphasizing its importance to children for containing its contagion potential. In this way, parents are preparing students to consider the welfare of another human being, their child's teacher and other fellow students with unknown health conditions. Practicing safe measures before schools starts will help children follow suit when they return to school
Make time for addressing a child's social emotional needs through conversation, physical comfort and re-assurance. Students while excited to return to school in the fall will also have social, academic and safety concerns. It is important for parents to give space for their children to share their fears, disappointments, and worries. The change in family and social life that necessitated physical distancing from friends, experiences of loss of activities and contact with close relatives, as well as death of family members and cold-blooded murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and other black persons, can shake the felt sense of a child's security in the world and outlook for a positive future. When students feel emotionally supported by their parents, they are better equipped to focus on meeting academic and social challenges that may arise from school entry and the "new normal."

Students from less economically advantaged neighborhoods (or who are more vulnerable learning-wise for a variety of reasons) tend to lose academic gains over the summer. Because of the stress of these unique challenging times, it may be important for parents to let go of imposing any additional pressure on their children to achieve or catch-up. Perhaps, allowing kids to just be kids may be sufficient for the next couple of weeks. Whenever possible, parents can encourage informal learning. Outdoor activities offer physical strengthening, endurance, and energy release, as well as discovery of nature; verbal skills can be enhanced through oral story-telling, creative writing, drama, and music; games stimulate memory retention and problem-solving; and science can be understood through cooking and baking. Summer is a great time to help children experience the joy of reading which can be done together as a family or on their own.

There are wonderful classes available online to help parents learn how to practice mindfulness with their children. Mindfulness practice is particularly helpful in reducing stress and offering a sense of individual agency in an uncontrollable world. It allows us to sit with our uncertainty and access an inner sense of calm. Providing children with tools to help manage their emotions will support the learning environment when teachers and students are back in the classroom.

Why is mindfulness in education even more important now?

Schools for the most part have not taught students much information about the nature of their minds and its connection

Rita Benn, continued

to mental and physical health. Mindfulness in education can provide the foundation for this conceptual, scientific understanding, along with practical, experiential application.

The uncertainty of when or how this pandemic will end, and its ramifications on all aspects of life has created anxiety in most of us. We have collectively undergone a shared trauma, whether or not we show extreme behavioral symptoms of this impact. The confluence of the pandemic with the current awakening for many white people of systemic racism and the chaotic political climate is creating many challenges in regard to how we think, speak, and relate to one another. Mindfulness practices provide educators and students with the opportunity to become more aware of their thoughts and emotions and to re-set their inner compasses when feeling overwhelmed and stressed.

With mindfulness, teachers and students learn how to pay closer attention to their inner experience in ways that afford them:

- More flexibility in thinking patterns
- Developing an open mind set
- Expanding their window of tolerance of overwhelm
- Reducing stress
- Experiencing joy in the ordinary
- Feeling our common humanity, embracing kindness, and caring of one another

As educators and students practice mindfulness, they become less reactive to emotional triggers, and more willing to examine and take responsibility for their actions. They can avail themselves with a set of techniques to steady themselves when internally "activated."

Research has demonstrated that when teachers have engaged in mindfulness training, they are more empathic and emotionally responsive to their students' needs and feel less stressed overall. When students are less stressed, they are more capable of learning. Studies are beginning to show that students who are taught mindfulness practices do actively use them to de-escalate from academic, familial, and peer-related stress.

Given our complex world, the uncertainty of an equitable and safe future, or even habitable planet, *it is critically important to give our students tools for maintaining equanimity and caring for one another*. Learning mindfulness in schools can provide such a foundation. We have the opportunity to offer students lifelong skills to reflect and get to know themselves, get along better with others, and positively cope with whatever life presents.

How are most of the teachers you know handling the pivot to teaching online?

Most of the teachers I've spoken to feel incredibly stressed. Transitioning to new teaching platforms with which they are totally unfamiliar and developing new materials that are creative and engaging for their students through this medium has been a challenging task to undertake. It is not unusual with the stress of the pandemic, for individuals to feel limited in accessing their creativity and less productive.

Individuals who enter the teaching profession do so to make a difference in the lives of their students. Year after year teachers take time to get to know their students and develop caring relationships. In this way, teachers learn how to best motivate and stimulate interest in subject material as well as how to tailor their approach to the unique needs of the student. With online learning, teachers are concerned they may not be able to forge as strong a connection and reach all their students consistently or equitably. In addition, communication with students and parents regarding academic expectations may be more time-consuming with email overloads of individual explanations.

Despite these stresses, I know that teachers are rising to the occasion with a sense of professionalism and commitment to do the very best they can for their students. That dedication lies deep in their DNA.

Have you developed a new habit during our stay-home period that you'd like to keep when this is over?

During this pandemic, I've been blessed by adequate health. In this stage of life, I have freedom from the demands of child rearing and from worry over financial resources. I've been able to return to exploring creative pursuits. During this stay at home period, I have engaged in more regular creative writing activities and setting up a space to paint. I have also been taking several yoga classes a week through Zoom and intend to continue this practice when this pandemic is over. I do hope to return to taking care of my three young grandchildren with more consistently, as the pandemic has limited the amount of physical contact and time with them due to the suggested vulnerability of my status as a designated senior.

How have you been able to pivot your teachings and trainings to serve your community?

The Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education (MC4ME) offers school communities – staff, students, and parents, various teaching and trainings to cultivate mindfulness. Typically these are held as in-person activities. With the pandemic, we pivoted to serve our communities online and with new initiatives.
We spearheaded the coordination of a series of half hour virtual drop-in sessions for mindfulness practice with other like-minded organizations where anyone could attend for free. These sessions were offered daily at least once a day for the last several months (April-July).

We collaborated with the local mental health professional community to share reputable on-line resources from across the country to support first line responders. We transitioned our mindfulness teacher training program to an on-line Zoom format. We also transitioned our summer workshop that we offer to teachers and school related personnel to a Zoom virtual platform. The upcoming two day workshop will be divided into four half-day online sessions: August 3- 6.

In addition, we have also reconfigured a one-day professional development program where we introduce mindfulness as a self-care practice for teachers, clinicians and parents into a four-session program. In the fall, we intend to offer our yearly half-day community mindfulness retreat on-line (October 10) if it is still unsafe to have an in-person gathering.

In light of the pandemic, we are coordinating the launch of a webinar this August that will help prepare educators to

understand and cope with the collective trauma we have experienced from the pandemic lurking in the shadows for both teachers and students.

The persistence of the pandemic unfortunately has led us to postpone a major statewide conference we had been planning for over a year on mindfulness and racial and social justice. Given the uncertainty around the safety of convening a large gathering, and travel required for our national speaker, we are postponing this event until the fall 2021. We hope that an in-person event will be possible by then. We were certainly disappointed, especially given the timeliness of this issue. While we considered holding the event remotely, we felt many educators and clinicians may be getting fatigued from using this medium and we wanted educators and clinicians to be able to network more intimately with each other around this issue. To prepare for the 2021 event, we plan to launch a series of online book discussions across the state and collaborative virtual speaker series with our statewide partner organizations on the application of mindfulness to racial and social justice.

Another event we were forced to postpone launching was a statewide week of mindfulness that was scheduled for last April. We intend to conduct this event statewide instead for a day this October through a hybrid model of virtual and small group gatherings.

The vision of the Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education (MC4ME.org) is to inspire compassionate and mindful school communities throughout Michigan where all students thrive. We continue to remain committed to this vision and invite like-minded community members to join us in making a difference in these times that are so filled with challenge and possibility. There are numerous ways to be involved. Please contact us at info@mc4me.org to learn more.

MC4ME™
Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education

TEACHING MINDFULNESS TO YOUTH

A Summer Training Intensive over Zoom

Embodying Mindfulness in our Schools

We are living in unprecedented times.

Many of us, including our youth, are feeling overwhelmed. Our prolonged period of isolation, growing recognition of the extent of racial injustice in our country, and uncertainty over our own health and safety undermine our mental health. As we anticipate the ways school life may unfold this fall, it's critical to encourage the learning of mindfulness as a skill to support our students' well-being.

This four-morning institute is designed to prepare educators and support service professionals **to translate their personal mindfulness practice into classroom and therapy settings**. We'll share ideas on how to embody mindfulness practice and address the collective trauma we and our students are experiencing.

During the training, we'll focus specifically on adapting key mindfulness practices to **enhance emotion regulation** in our youth. We'll pay particular attention to how these mindfulness activities can be adapted into technology and included in the potential hybrid schedules now being considered for k-12 education. Participants will explore teaching these activities in breakouts with their peers and with guidance from the program instructors. Scripts and handouts will be provided.

After polling some participating teachers and therapists, we've developed a schedule we think will be most convenient for you. The Institute will take place on four consecutive mornings (August 3, 4, 5, 6) followed by three monthly coaching sessions, TBA.

Please join us during these critical, life-changing and *hopeful* times. We look forward to your participation.

MC4ME program faculty for the training institute include Rita Benn (PhD), Mary Spence (PhD) and Kristin Ervin (BA), who have many years of experience in teaching and practicing mindfulness.

Program Dates: August 3, 4, 5, 6
Time: 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
Course Fee (Before July 25)**:** $195 • Late Registration: $245
Partial scholarships are available upon request of financial need

TO REGISTER or for more information: http://www.mc4me.org
Social Work CEUs and SCECHs for Educators will be available.

Crazy Wisdom Book Pick of the Week

By Sarah Newland

Hungry by Eve Turrow-Paul

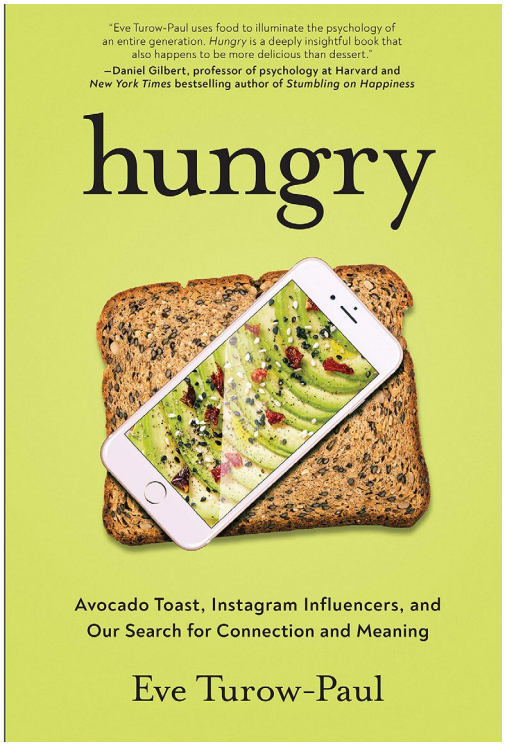
We wait in lines around the block for scoops of cookie dough. We photograph every meal. We visit selfie performance spaces and leave lucrative jobs to become farmers and craft brewers.

Why? What are we really hungry for?

In *Hungry*, Eve Turow-Paul provides a guided tour through the stranger corners of today's global food and lifestyle culture. How are 21st-century innovations and pressures are redefining people's needs and desires? How does "foodie" culture, along with other lifestyle trends, provide an answer to our rising rates of stress, loneliness, anxiety, and depression?

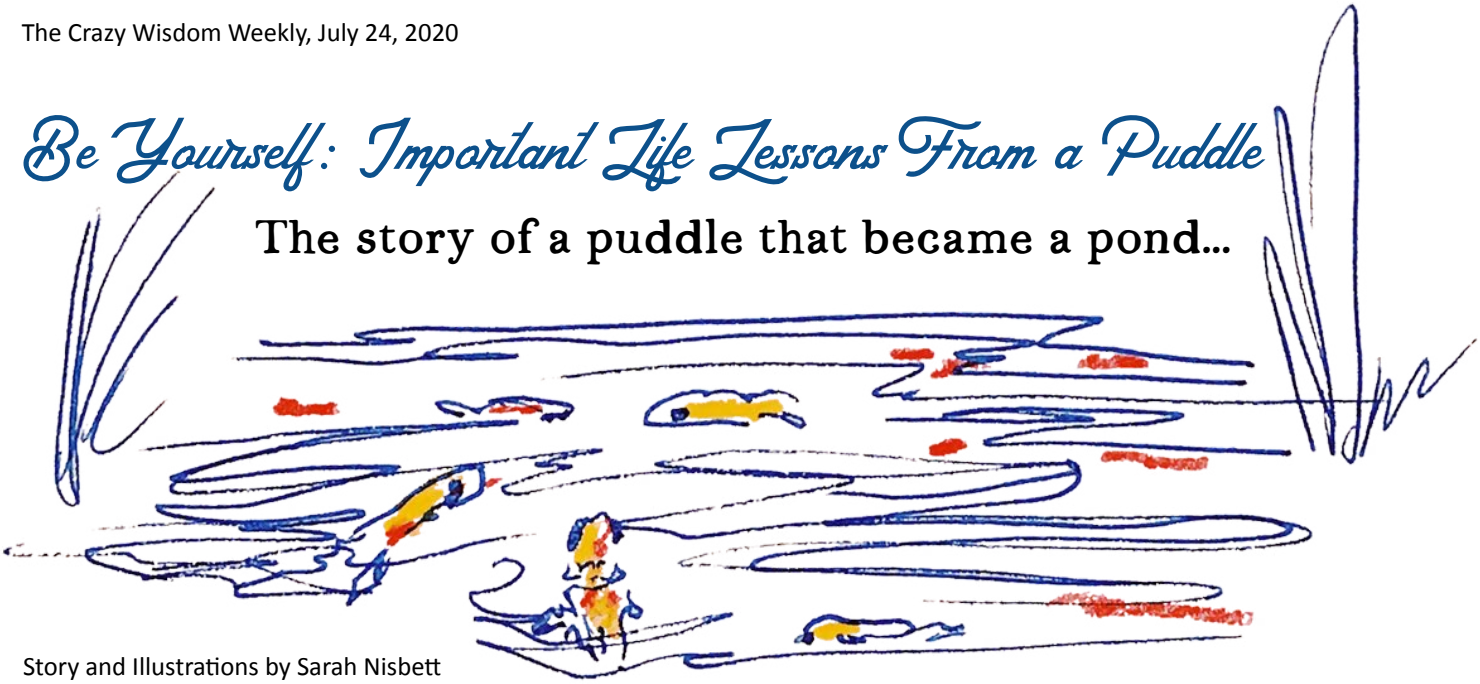
Weaving together evolutionary psychology and sociology with captivating investigative reporting from around the world, Turow-Paul reveals the modern hungers—physical, spiritual, and emotional—that are driving today's top trends.

Click here to purchase a copy of *Hungry.*


"Eve Turow-Paul uses food to illuminate the psychology of an entire generation. *Hungry* is a deeply insightful book that also happens to be more delicious than dessert."
—Daniel Gilbert, professor of psychology at Harvard and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Stumbling on Happiness*
hungry
Avocado Toast, Instagram Influencers, and Our Search for Connection and Meaning
Eve Turow-Paul

Be Yourself: Important Life Lessons From a Puddle

The story of a puddle that became a pond...



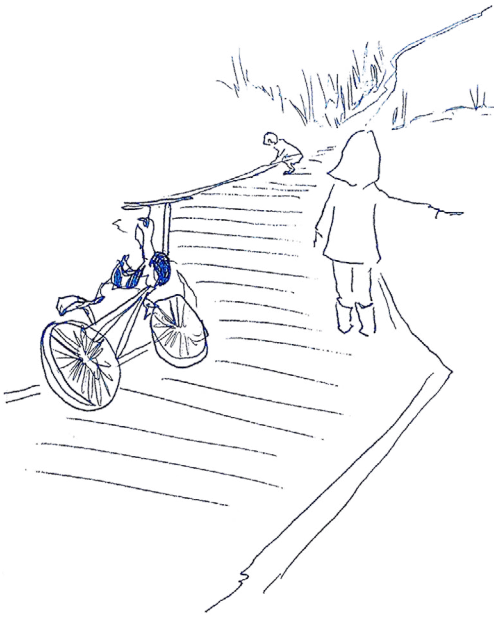
Story and Illustrations by Sarah Nisbett

The puddle lived in West Park, a grassy, public park located a few blocks from the house I grew up in. I spent a lot of my young life in that park, playing on the swings, making forts underneath the canopy of a large mulberry bush and scraping my knees trying to climb a large, rough concrete seal— a design that for some reason graced every playground in southern Michigan (and perhaps the rest of the country) built during the late 70s and 80s.

West Park was large, but otherwise fairly unremarkable as parks go. A long concrete sidewalk ran the length of it, cutting a path between the playground and the bandshell and the baseball diamond and the soccer fields. The playground was located at the far end of the park and to get to it, you had to walk through a patch of sidewalk that was perpetually submerged under one gigantic stagnant puddle. The puddle spilled over onto the baseball diamond, flooding the path from base to base and turning it into a mud-pit. If, in an effort to avoid the puddle, you thought a detour through the grass might be passable, you would be proven wrong by the squish of your shoes sinking into the damp earth, leaving you with water-soaked socks for the rest of the walk home.

The puddle made the park impassable. It made the baseball diamond useless. It made your socks squeak inside your shoes when you walked.

For most of my life, that puddle straddled that sidewalk and seeped into the surrounding grass. Only in the hottest, driest height of summer did it recede, and even then, there was mud.

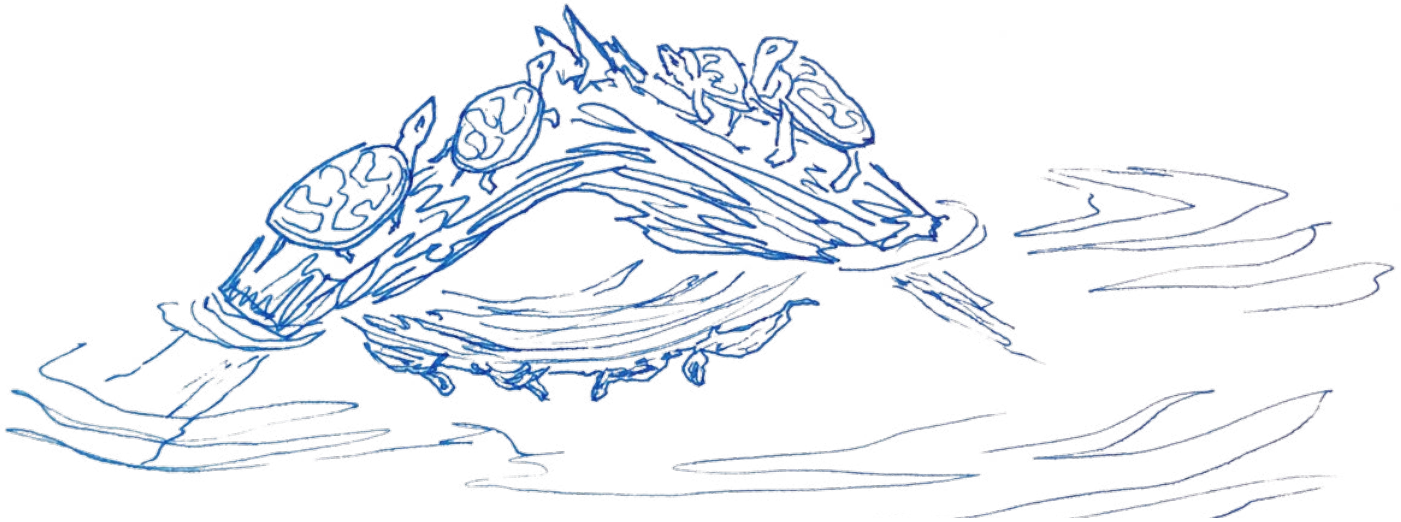


I left my hometown of Ann Arbor, Michigan to go live in other cities and I forgot about the park and the puddle.

Years later, while home for a family visit in late spring, we decided to walk to the park. As we rounded the corner where the puddle had always lived, I saw that it was gone; in its place was a real little pond. The concrete sidewalk that had long been buried beneath the puddle was now an elevated boardwalk on top of which many people were standing, having stopped to look at some passing ducks and schools of goldfish swimming below. The boundaries of that troublesome puddle had been allowed to expand so greatly that it transformed from an obstacle into a universe. Within its new borders now lived:

Several schools of goldfish ranging from bright gold to mahogany, rumored to have suddenly appeared in the pond after a friendly neighbor took a trip to the pet store.

A dozen turtles that ranged in size from small pancake to small dinner plate and who enjoyed arranging themselves by size as they sunned on the arch of partially submerged log.



A muskrat named Ted who occupied his time by cheerfully swimming back and forth across the pond, his mouth stuffed full of sweet grass which he plucked from the edge of the water.

A mother duck and her five ducklings who followed her in one long, perfect line as if attached with an invisible thread. The mother duck was also followed by two argumentative mallards who were always clamoring for her attention. At the end of the day, the whole brood would make peace and retire to the top of an old stump to sleep while mother duck stood watch.

A gathering of tadpoles so great that the edges of the pond were practically black with swarms of their wiggling bodies.

A multitude of toads who had created those tadpoles over the course of a few nights when they gathered in the reeds belting out their mating calls: long, sustained chirps made by puffing out great sacs on their throats. A stunning and seemingly romantic trick that amplified the sound so greatly that it could be heard inside the houses that surrounded the park.

A great blue heron that stalked the edges of the pond, moving so slowly and with such impossible patience that you could not begrudge him the dinner of toads and tadpoles and goldfish that he scooped up in his beak.

A flock of redwing blackbirds who swooped in daring arches over the pond before deftly alighting on long reeds in a flash of crimson and onyx, announcing their arrival with a wild, throaty trill.

And this is just to name a few of the inhabitants of this new world. Other notable species attracted to the pond included curious dogs who pulled at their leashes to nose at a bobbing duck or the swishing tail of a muskrat. And of course, humans of all ages who couldn't help but pause to marvel as they passed through the park. In fact, it seems that people did more than pause, they came to the park to see the pond. The pond was now the reason to visit the park, (although I still recommend a detour at the giant concrete seal…).

It has been many years since I was surprised to find a pond instead of a puddle and I am now one of the many humans who make a point to visit its rippling waters.

During these strange times, while quarantining here in Michigan, I walk to this pond almost every day. Some days I take my sketchbook with me and draw the citizens of this little universe. Some days I simply come and sit and enjoy the peace of this little oasis. I notice the similarities between those who flock here —from the mama duck teaching her babies to swim to human mamas teaching their babies to read—so much life is being sustained above, below and around this little pond.

I've watched spring unfold here and I imagine I may see summer come and go, too. Every time I am here, I marvel at this puddle who became a pond—and I decided I finally had to tell its story.

continued on next page

For so long, the pond had been forced to be a puddle by bossy people who decided it would be better as a baseball diamond, or a soggy field or simply covered in concrete. It had been reduced to a nuisance. And then somebody changed that. They let it be a pond, in fact, they encouraged it to be a pond. And by virtue of that gift, the pond gave back with unlimited generosity.

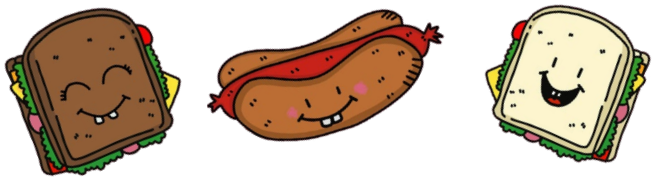
Of all the inhabitants of the pond, the one that I love the most is the story that lives inside of it. You see, the story of a sad puddle that became a beautiful pond isn't really the story of a pond or a puddle at all, it's a story about each of us and the profound gifts we can share when we are allowed to be what we have always been: ourselves.

A former opera singer, Sarah Nisbett is the creative director behind Drawn on the Way. A self-taught live sketch artist and illustrator, Sarah loves to draw the people, fashions, pets, and animals that she encounters "on the way."

Want to see more stories from the pond? Visit Sarah's website, drawnontheway.com.

Click here to hear the frogs!

COMFORT FOOD for kids!



Omelete Muffins

By Lauren Madaras

Omelete muffins are great for brunch, or an on the go meal, and a great way to hide veggies!

Makes twelve muffins.

Ingredients:

8-9 eggs
1/2 Cup shredded cheese
Veggies—handful of spinach, mushrooms, peppers, zuchini
1/2 Cup meat—bacon, ham, or sausage
Olive oil for sautèe.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cook chosen meat in a large skilet then set aside to cool. Sautèe veggies in olive oil.

In a large bowl, whisk eggs and cheese, then add all remaining ingredients. Pour into greased muffin pan. Bake 20 minutes until eggs are set.

Let cool and enjoy!

Store extras in refrigerator and reheat in the microwave, 30 seconds.

The Crazy Wisdom weekly Calendar

Kaballah

H2W2 - K4K - Happy, Healthy, Wealthy, Wise - Kabbalah for Kids (5th grade & up) • August 2 • 1 p.m. Utilizing movement, multi-sensory input, color, and experiential learning, we build self-esteem of spiritually evolved children (rather than reinforcing feelings of being different, damaged, defective, disordered, dysfunctional). In an ascensional journey through the Tree of Life, we aid in organizational skills, navigating low-vibrational emotions, relationships, setting healthy boundaries. We encourage children in discovering and fostering their authentic selves and genius, to fulfill their spiritual mission of a healthy, interdependent, functional planet for the prophecy of "1000 Years of Peace."

Kabbalah for Couples • August 2 • 3 p.m. This is not couples therapy. This is for basically good relationships that both parties are willing to work on, to make their relationship even better, physically, emotionally, mentally, financially, spiritually, and energetically. This two-hour session (rather than one hour), one time per month, for about a year, can help you get your relationship to the place that you always wanted it to be but did not know how. For more information call Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com or visit clair-ascension.com.

Online Workshops

Virtual Program—Engineering Your World • July 24 • Noon • Dive into the steps an engineer takes to solve a problem. We'll design, build, and test our way through some at-home engineering projects. Free and for all ages! Pre-register online. For more information please email info@lesliesnc.org or visit them online at www.lesliesnc.org.

Virtual Program - Cow Eye Dissection Demo • July 31 • Noon • Get a closer look at the anatomy of the eye and how it works together with the brain to create visual images as we demo a real cow eye dissection. Free and for all ages! Pre-registration is required. For more information please email info@lesliesnc.org or visit them online at www.lesliesnc.org.

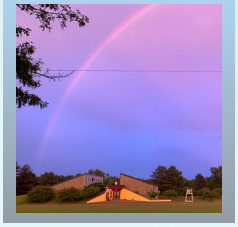
Virtual Meditation

Myriad of Meditations with Karen Greenberg, R.P.T., and Certified Essence Repatterning Practitioner • July 26 • 6:30 p.m. • Meditation is an essential component to spiritual evolution. Learn a myriad of meditation techniques, to discover which resonate for you (possibly dissolving years of resistance to mediation). Learn meditations with fire, water, air, earth, with the Four Worlds, with different breathing, with Holy Geometry, sacred letters, powerful Archetypes, spiritual beings, qualities of G-D, with movement, music, toning, colors, scents, gemstones, and trees, including several guided meditations through the Tree of Life. For more information call Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511 or email krngrnbg@gmail.com.

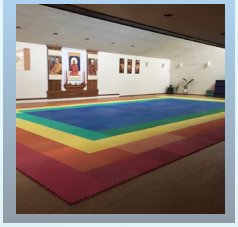
Get your calendar listings in by Monday morning at 10 A.M. for the next Crazy Wisdom Weekly Issue!
Send your listing in here.

TRIPLE CRANE MONASTERY AND CONVENT
MAHAYANA BUDDHISM HUAYEN SCHOOL

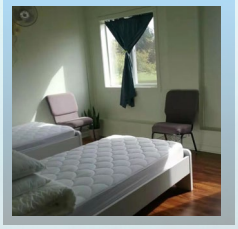
A Place for Spiritual Practice
Triple Crane Monastery and Convent, a branch of Great Huayen Monastery in Taiwan is dedicated to offering to the community a place to learn and practice Mahayana Buddhist teachings and practices for beginners and advanced practitioners alike



WEEKLY **Yoga and Meditation Classes**
By Donation
Special Events & Traditional Tea Ceremony
One Day Silent Meditation Retreat
Fourth Sunday of each Month
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Check web calendar for all event dates and times



Full Residential Retreat or by the hour space available
Chan Hall is a beautiful 10,374 sq. ft. building that houses sleeping quarters, a full lower level kitchen, and a social/gathering space
Contact Us for More Information



TRIPLE CRANE MONASTERY

7665 Werkner Rd. Chelsea MI 48118
Web: www.Huayenworld.org/usa/
Email: triple.crane@huayenwold.org
Master Zhong Hai (winnie) 734-757-8567

Growing Your Resolve

By Michelle McLemore

"I need to buy some seeds. I have to get something in the ground." Similar phrasing was heard by Michiganders in April of 2020 but the quotation actually comes from Arthur Miller's tragic-hero, Willy Loman, who in *Death of a Salesman* wanders, muttering this under the weight of extreme anxiety. Miller (University of Michigan alum and international dramatist) called out mankind's instinctual healing agent–to go back to the earth in time of uncertainty. Beyond food, the health benefits to the nervous and immune systems of being out in nature have been studied in-depth. Decreases in blood pressure, heart rate, and depressive symptoms have all been linked to time with nature's greenery. University of Michigan (2008) found group walks as well as solo experiences in nature can also improve memory and focus, regardless of the weather.

Though it is July, and generally considered a little late to start from seed, herbs are readily available in many groceries for cooking assistance. They can thrive in containers on a porch or in a small garden bed, in most conditions for southeastern Michigan, and have a multitude of uses. However, before plunking them randomly in the ground, it is best to know which spread easily and which stay concentrated to one location. For instance, lovely spearmint and bronze fennel both travel vast distances under the ground. Both are best put into pots and then lowered into the ground to keep them from taking over your garden or lawn.

In addition to cooking, many folks still utilize fresh and dried herbs, as well as essential oils, to treat anything from common maladies to severe diseases. These natural medicines are formed into tinctures, salves, poultices, and used in aromatherapy. The U.S. Food and drug Administration has a comprehensive list online for herbs and common plants considered safe for internal consumption. Cooking, medicinal, or crafts, whichever your intent, these five common, easy to grow herbs are staples for any garden.

Spearmint (Metha spicata) Medicinal Part: leaves. Uses: For cooking and used in flavoring iced drinks and herb teas. Finely chopped used in Tzatziki, Tabbouleh, and as a sauce for lamb. Sprigs also flavor potatoes, peas, and many Vietnamese dishes. Otherwise used to scent bathwater, and to rub on the teeth and gums as a gentle cleanser. Remedy for indigestion, stomachache, wind, and hiccoughs, cooling and soothing feverish children, and for flavoring chewing gum. Also aids as insect repellant, improves memory, and has antimicrobial, antifungal, antibacterial, and antiviral properties.

Spearmint

Sage

Sage (Salvia officinalis). Medicinal Part: The leaves. Salvia apiana is native to the southwestern United States, northwestern Mexico, and parts of California. This is the type used for ceremonial smudging and cleansing. Common Sage Uses: Paired often with pork, liver, bacon, sausages, and stuffing for cooking meat. Can make a pleasant herb tea good for sore throats, mouth ulcers, and gum infections. Use it for its antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, and astringent properties, and it relaxes spasms. Can regulate hormonal imbalances during menopause. May provide relief or cure of many serious and life-threatening diseases such as depression, dementia, obesity, diabetes, lupus, heart disease, and cancer.

Basil

Basil (Ocimum Basilicum) Medicinal part: The leaves. Sweet basil is native to tropical Asia. There are also East Indian and African varieties. Uses: In cooking it is most used to offset the acidity of tomato-based salads, soups, and sauces. Goes well with beans and zucchini. Remedies: May lower fever, ease spasms, and improve digestion. Remedy for nervous indigestion, wind, nausea, tension headaches, and sleeplessness when over-excited or anxious. It is anti-bacterial and may treat gastro-enteritis. Crushed leaf may relieve insect bites and stings. Antioxidant properties.

Chives

Chives (Allium schoenoprasum) Medicinal Part: Spikes and flowers. Uses: For cooking, the mild onion flavor brightens potatoes, eggs, soft cheese, soups, and sauces. Mix with chervil, tarragon, and shallots and it can be used as a basis for herb butter or a sauce. Flowers can be added to salads for color and are edible. Includes Vitamin C, Vitamin K, and calcium. Good for digestive system and circulation. May improve the appetite and has antioxidants.

Rosemary

Rosemary (Rosemarinus Officinalis) Medicinal Part: The tops. Uses: In cooking, use sparingly, like a sprig on top of finished meat. Pairs with vegetables, lamb, and any dish in which red wine or garlic is used. Finely chop as flavoring for biscuits. Flowers are used in salads with smoked meats. Gentle stimulant. Oil is used as a perfume for ointments, good for scalp, hair, and skin circulation when used topically. Regulates blood pressure, reduces swollen glands, helpful against pneumonia, may detox liver from certain opiates. Enhances memory, improves alertness, and helps with contentment.

Look for awesome recipes using these common herbs in next week's comfort food column!

Live in the sunshine. Swim in the sea. Drink in the wild air.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson
Photo by Vicko Mozarah on Unsplash